

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Treblig Inc

South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Treblig Makes Improvements To Improve Sales

Client Profile:

Treblig, Inc., established in 1983 and located in Greenville, South Carolina, is a certified, woman-owned precision machine shop that employs 13 people.

Situation:

Estlean Cook assumed ownership of Treblig, Inc. after her husband, Ron, suffered a serious heart attack in 1991. The Cooks have an interest in improving the long-term viability of their business and contributing to the improvement of their community. The two were instrumental in forming the South Carolina Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association. Through that organization, the Cooks have developed a registered apprenticeship program to help improve the skill level of Treblig's employees and those in other upstate machine shops.

Although both owners viewed the company as being financially sound with very little debt, Ron Cook expressed concern that labor costs were 52 percent of production costs, compared to a national average of 32 percent. The owners also wanted to increase sales to \$1 million annually – up from \$800,000. However, they did not have a marketing plan to achieve that goal. Treblig was additionally concerned with a lack of organization in the facility. The company contacted the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

SCMEP recommended that Treblig select and implement a suitable small enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to provide control, visibility, accountability, and discipline in the operation. This ERP system implementation required Treblig to define processes, procedures, capacities, expectations, and measurements. Inventory would have to be maintained in the system, and jobs would need to be quoted and compared to actual costs, a task which would be new to the company. The system also would be used to gauge how well each area was performing and define where weaknesses existed, thereby motivating workforce performance. The system would further motivate employees by establishing a base for an employee gain-sharing program and linking employee performance to the attainment of company goals.

Secondly, SCMEP suggested that Treblig consider using a work profiling system (WPS) to develop an accurate database of job specific skills and the behaviors required to perform a job. This information could then be used to develop a

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tailored training program based on the key skills, critical competencies, job-related attributes, and behaviors identified by WPS.

SCMEP also helped Treblig reorganize its plant for maximum efficiency, and though the reorganization process is only 50 percent complete, customers have already responded positively to the cleaner, safer workplace.

Finally, SCMEP recommended that Treblig develop a marketing plan to serve as a roadmap for reaching its annual sales goal of \$1 million, beginning with a survey of existing and potential customers to estimate the possible return on repeat business.

Results:

Implemented a new ERP system.

Established an employee gain-sharing program.

Increased sales and anticipate reaching the \$1 million mark this year.

Received a grant to pursue ISO 9000 certification.

Invested \$250,000 in new machines and made additional investments in software, educational, and physical improvements to the facility.

Installed manufacturing resources planning (MRP) software.

Implemented 5S to eliminate waste, wasted space, and wasted motion.

Testimonial:

"[Thanks to the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership], sales have increased, and we fully expect to hit our goal of doing \$1 million of business this year."

Estlean Cook, President